





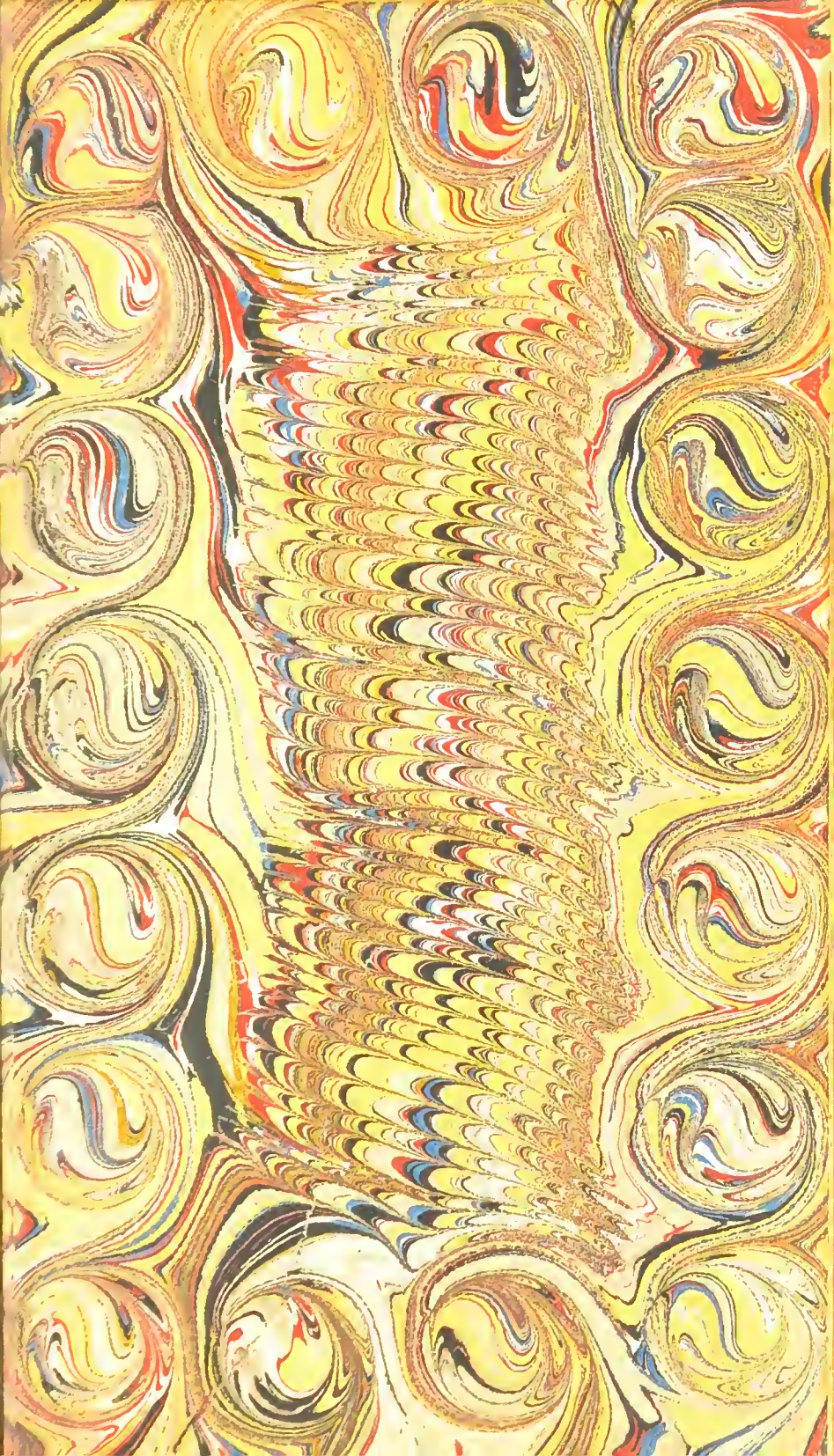
*The University Library  
Leeds*



*The gift of the  
Marquis of Normanby*

CAGE  
SMI





STACK  
MEDICINE



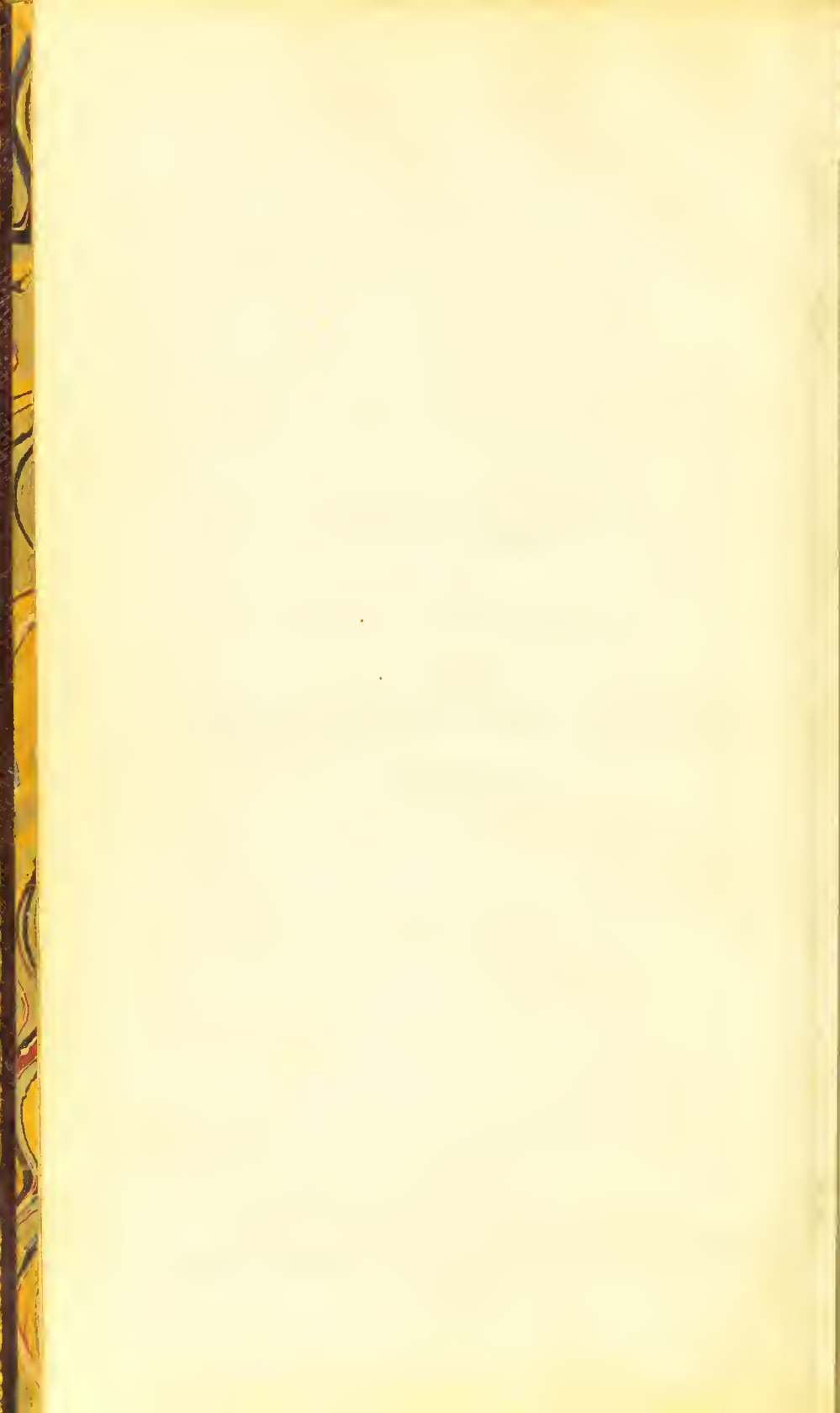








OBSERVATIONS  
UPON  
A PECULIAR DISEASE  
OF THE  
CÆCUM, OR CAPUT COLI,  
&c. &c. &c.



OBSERVATIONS  
UPON  
A PECULIAR DISEASE  
OF THE  
CÆCUM, OR CAPUT COLI;

CONTAINED IN  
A LETTER  
TO DOCTOR CRAMPTON,

FROM  
*h*  
FRANCIS W. SMITH, M. D.,  
*z*

ONE OF THE PHYSICIANS IN ORDINARY TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE LORD LIEUTENANT,  
FELLOW OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION  
OF PHYSICIANS, ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF THE SURGICAL SOCIETY  
OF IRELAND, AND LECTURER ON MATERIA MEDICA IN THE  
MEDICO CHIRURGICAL SCHOOL, PETER-STREET;  
FORMERLY PHYSICIAN TO ST. ANNE'S  
DISPENSARY, AND LATELY TO  
ST. PETER'S.

---

DUBLIN:  
HODGES AND SMITH, 21, COLLEGE-GREEN.

1835.



UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY,  
LEEDS.

60418

## INTRODUCTION.

---

THE following observations had not been intended for Publication, they were originally thrown together for the purpose of being read at a meeting of the Association of Physicians, and having served that purpose, they were laid aside. From observing, however, the continued frequency of the affection, as I at that time described it, and from the comparative silence of other and abler pens upon the subject, I have been at length induced to give to the Public, medical and otherwise, the fruits of my experience upon a subject, which although of inestimable import-

ance, as connected with our health and happiness, has, however, most unaccountably, been doomed to comparative obscurity.

FRANCIS W. SMITH,

*25, Lower Baggot-street.*



TO

JOHN CRAMPTON, M.D. M.R.I.A.,

FELLOW OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS,  
KING'S PROFESSOR OF MATERIA MEDICA IN THE SCHOOL OF PHYSIC,  
PHYSICIAN TO DR. STEVENS' HOSPITAL, TO SWIFT'S HOSPITAL,  
AND TO THE HOUSE OF INDUSTRY, ETC. ETC. ETC.

---

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR well known zeal in the cultivation of medical science, your high station in the profession, your affability to your brethren, would, any of them, constitute you a person to whom a letter might with propriety be addressed, having for its object the elucidation of practical difficulties in the treatment of disease. But other reasons exist which point you out as the person to whom I can with peculiar propriety address myself in the present instance. Two years ago, when I had composed a paper to be read before the Association of Physicians, having for its object, an improvement in the treatment of certain abdominal affections, I happened to mention to you my opinions, and

the difficulties I had met with in carrying forward my investigations, and in forming practical conclusions on a subject, which, although of great importance in itself, had, however, met with the most extraordinary neglect on the part of medical authors. You on that occasion resolved many of my doubts, and in generously communicating to me the fruits of your great and varied experience upon abdominal ailments, you greatly abbreviated my labour, and strengthened and confirmed me as to the value and importance of the results which I had obtained from my inquiries; and I have now determined, under the sanction of your high name, and in the hope of being of use to a class of sufferers, who in number bear no small proportion to the mass of the community, to give publicity to my views, satisfied if I shall be so fortunate as to rescue even one victim from the wearing anxiety of an imperfectly understood disease; or from, perhaps, the dread realities of what is popularly and too seductively termed an *alterative course of mercury*.\*

---

\* It is calculated by an eminent physician, "that for one case in which mercury is administered in a proper and justifiable juncture, it is exhibited in at least thirty-nine

## CHAP. I.

AMONGST the many forms of abdominal disease to which the human race are liable, some possess well marked and distinctive signs, which render them easily discernible at the first glance even to the most uninformed; others, however, unhappily, either from not possessing those broad and intelligible traits which would serve to distinguish them, or from their simulating other diseases, resembling them in character, though of widely different origin, often give rise to doubts in diagnosis, which produce indecision in the practitioner's plans, and oftentimes involve the patient's future comfort, or even life itself. When it is considered how easily patients may mislead themselves with regard to their complaints, and how often their partial statements may become the

---

cases, not only without good effects, but in a manner calculated to produce consequences as pernicious as they are lasting."

Those who have had an opportunity of marking the baleful effects of mercury, even in its mildest forms, upon constitutions predisposed to scrofula, will readily subscribe to the above opinion.—*Author.*



cause of error to their medical advisers, our wonder should be, not that so many mistakes occur in practice from this source, but that the list is not much longer than it really is.

Amongst the numerous cases of bowel disease which we were called upon to treat during and subsequent to the summer of 1831, (at which period the population of those kingdoms appeared to be under some influence affecting in a marked manner the functions and usual economy of the intestinal canal,) a peculiar form of enteritic disease presented itself with a remarkable degree of frequency. It is not my wish to convey the idea, that the disease I refer to had never made its appearance before the summer of 1831; on the contrary, it is at all times occurring sporadically amongst our population; but that it did at that particular period present itself to our notice with such unusual frequency, and in forms so aggravated as to command attention, and with its symptoms thrown into bold relief diminish the usual risk of its being mistaken for other diseases.

The disease I am about to describe, is one which is at all times and at all seasons of frequent occurrence, but has in most instances been confounded with and mistaken

for other maladies. It is insidious in its origin, chronic in its course, seldom running into the acute form, and has generally made an extensive progress ere its victim conceives himself in need of medical assistance. Fever, if present, generally puts on the characters of hectic ; but does not possess, till towards the fatal termination of the disease, paroxysms at all normal in their recurrence.

The first symptoms complained of by the patient are, dull pain in the right side, which can be increased by pressure ; an inability, or more properly speaking, a disinclination to go to sleep upon the left side ; the bowels present a great degree of irregularity in their action, the stools being for the most part dry, scanty, and unfrequent, and not unusually clayey in colour and imperfect in consistency ; slight diarrhœa, generally appearing from time to time at intervals of uncertain duration ; the urine is in most cases high-coloured, and abounding in animal salts ; occasionally, however, it is natural in its appearance and qualities, or even sometimes appears of a very pale colour, and shews a deficiency in the constituent salts ; this is, however, rare.

In the early stages of the disease the

appetite generally is undisturbed ; the tongue sometimes slightly furred, and of a whitish or yellowish colour in the mornings, but is as frequently of a healthy colour and appearance ; the pulse, if fever be not present, is slower and more languid than in health ; headach is not generally complained of ; the countenance begins to assume an unhealthy, yellowish appearance, with dark-coloured areolæ round the eyes ; the individual loses flesh, and acquires a disinclination for exertion. As the disease advances the pain becomes more distressing, and the region in which it makes itself felt more extensive ; from having at first been felt as a dull, undefined pain in the right side, the patient now feels it in the whole region lying between the cartilages of the false ribs on the right side, and the crest and spine of the os ilium or upper hip bone, and generally the pain is described as running along the upper bone of the hip, and sometimes as passing across the small of the back even to the opposite side, or as occurring in the right hypochondriac region, and reaching down towards the iliac fossa, below the centre of a line drawn between the navel and the anterior superior spinous process of the ilium, and rather nearer the lat-



ter, and not unfrequently the point in which the pain makes itself felt, is one in the right loin corresponding very exactly to the upper edge of the ilio-sacral symphysis. The stomach still continues to perform its functions with tolerable regularity, and chymification would appear to be carried on effectively ; but still nutrition does not take place in a sufficient degree to repair the waste of the body ; the liver begins to become irregular in its action ; flatulency of the bowels becomes a distressing symptom ; a deficiency in the circulation, and vital warmth of the lower extremities is complained of, at the very time when perhaps the patient is annoyed with flushing of the cheeks and palms of the hands. The skin now acquires a preternatural dryness ; transpiration is irregular and insufficient, or if it occur, it is in particular situations, as in the axillæ or loins, or perhaps it appears in cold perspirations on the feet ; the hair becomes arid, and shews a disposition to drop out, and the patient altogether acquires a sunk and marasmatic appearance.

If at this period we subject the patient to a suitable examination, previously relaxing the abdominal muscles by bending forward the head and shoulders, and causing the

limbs to be drawn up, we shall find that on carefully examining that portion of the abdomen complained of, the liver is neither enlarged nor diminished, and that our *pressure made in a direction upwards, outwards, and to the right side, will not increase the pain, whilst if we make pressure downwards and to the right side*, we shall very considerably increase the sufferings of the patient; and if we take the sensations of the patient as our guide, we shall find that his feelings become more acute as the pressure approaches a certain point at which the pain reaches its maximum; if we commence our pressure from a point midway between the navel and the superior anterior spinous process of the ilium, and carry it in a direction downwards, outwards, and to the right side, we shall soon arrive at the point alluded to; the pain is frequently described as shooting and radiating in all directions from under the finger, but principally in an upward direction. I have in a few instances known the pain to extend under those circumstances even up to the point of the shoulder; we shall at the same time in general be able to discover a tumour of a pretty considerable size, hard consistency, and irregular figure, occupying and

swelling upwards from the iliac fossa ; and we shall find that we can, by the tactus, and with the help of percussion, satisfy ourselves that an interval exists of greater or less extent between the tumour and the lower edge of the liver.

If the disease be allowed to continue still unrelieved, all the constitutional and local symptoms become aggravated, bilious and stercoracious vomitings come on, thickenings and depositions take place, adhesions, and finally ulcerations of the intestine engaged occur ; the stools are small, slimy, and streaked with blood and sanies ; the patient is run down by hectic fever, night sweats, loss of sleep and appetite, till at last death closes the scene.

---

## CHAP. II.

HAVING thus sketched the disease as it more generally presents itself, some considerations naturally arise of great interest in a practical point of view. 1st.—In what viscus or tissue has the disease its seat ? 2ndly.—With what other affections of the contents of the abdo-

men may it be confounded? And 3rdly.—In what does the most appropriate treatment consist. For convenience sake I will consider the second of those questions first.

In the lumbar pain, high-coloured urine, dry and deficient state of the alvine discharges, some might be inclined to discover an attack of chronic nephritis, or disease of the kidney; and more than one patient has to my knowledge been cupped, bathed, and treated for an affection of the kidney, who laboured under no such disease, but under an attack of the affection at present the subject of consideration. But the absence of fever, or heat of skin, the want of difficult or frequent micturition, &c., the quiescence of the cremaster, and the circumstance of the pain not being increased by motion, would, in themselves, be sufficient grounds for causing the opinion to be rejected. The pain felt in the back and side, the deranged bowels, the inroads made upon the health and strength, might cause a suspicion of the duodenum being in an irritable and inflamed state. But the absence of any thing like a sense of heat in the dorsal region under the false ribs; non-occurrence of periodicity in the pain, and uneasiness; pain and heat not occurring a certain

number of hours after meals ; the comparative integrity in the functions of the stomach ; the absence of tumour at the epigastrium ; would be quite sufficient to shew that the symptoms have some source other than irritation of the duodenum ; and the perfect integrity of the motions of the leg, the absence of tumour in the groin or loin, and the non-occurrence of rigors or of acceleration of pulse, would prevent the mistake of supposing that abscess of the psoas was present. With common colic, with gastritis, or with gastro-enteritis, there is little danger of its being confounded. But for chronic hepatitis there does exist the greatest danger of its being mistaken ; and that the mistake has frequently occurred I am quite satisfied ; several of the persons I have had to treat presented themselves as cases of liver disease, and assured me they derived that opinion from their medical advisers.

Supposing a medical man to rely upon the information which he could derive orally from his patient, I defy him not in very many cases of this disease to make the mistake I refer to. In the obtuse pain referrible to the side, and occasionally existing in the tip of the shoulder, increased as he would hear



from his patient, by pressure, the altered decubitus, the yellow tinge of the skin and tunica conjunctiva of the eyes, the constipated state of the bowels, the dry and unperspirable skin, the high-coloured urine, abounding in animal salts, the occasional occurrence of a yellow tongue, the coldness of the lower extremities, would all combine to form a body of evidence sufficient to make a practitioner who looked no farther, conceive, that the case could not but be one of chronic disease of the liver; and that he would not be acting in the interests of his patient, unless he subjected him to a course of mercurial medicines. But the pretty general absence of headach, the comparatively perfect condition of the functions of the stomach, the absence of bilious vomitings or salivation, might cause the practitioner to pause; and an examination of the abdomen, conducted in a proper manner, and by a good anatomist, would put the question at rest. If having placed the patient in a position propitious to an examination, that is with the abdominal muscles fully relaxed, it be found that on making pressure in a direction towards the liver, in a line from the navel upwards, outwards, and to the right side, the

pain be not increased ; and if on the other hand it be found that pressure made in a direction from the navel downwards, outwards, and to the right side, has the effect of causing a marked increase in the pain ; and if on percussing the abdomen carefully, we discover that the liver is natural in size, whilst we are able to discover a tumour fixed in the iliac fossa of the right side, which corresponds exactly to the seat of pain when pressure is applied, there would be good and sufficient grounds for rejecting the idea, that the liver was the viscus engaged ; whilst there would be equally good grounds for attributing the source of disease to the painful tumour which we should find occupying the iliac fossa. Placing the patient in a warm bath greatly facilitates the manual examination, as the soothing influence of the water induces better than any thing else a relaxed condition of the abdominal muscles ; and the tendency which the diaphragm always has under the same circumstances to mount up, or rather to remain in a comparatively quiescent state, by leaving room for the liver to ascend, serves to remove the latter from the neighbourhood of the painful tumour, and thus gives us a better opportunity of defining its

limits, and ascertaining its condition. In subjects with fat or very muscular abdominal parietes, the warm bath is an essential agent in assisting us to conduct the ventral exploration. In lean, lanky individuals, it is not of so great importance.

We now come to the next inquiry, which we proposed to consider, viz. in what viscus or tissue does the disease exist ?

---

### CHAP. III.

LET us for a moment bring to our recollection what are the leading symptoms, and we shall then be able, I think, to locate the disease without much difficulty. Pain is a symptom which is met with in every case, and as it is of a fixed character, and liable to be increased by pressure, we may reasonably conclude, that inflammation of some sort is present. Tumefaction of a certain portion of the abdomen is another symptom which is always, or nearly always, present, and as the tumour very exactly corresponds to the seat of the fæcal reservoir, termed the *cæcum*, or *caput coli*, we may conclude that the dis-

ease consists in some abnormal condition of the foregoing intestine ; an irregular state of the bowels, as regards their evacuations, is also an invariable symptom ; and the alteration of the decubitus, before referred to, is seldom wanting. The cæcum, or caput coli, is a somewhat triangular hollow viscus, of considerable capacity, and by a beautiful contrivance of nature, capable of a good share of distention, enjoying a secure, convenient, and tolerably fixed station. Sacculated in form, and depending in its position, it appears to be intended by nature to act the part of a reservoir for fæcal matter, and perhaps, also, to afford a situation in which the ingesta may again, as much as remains of them, undergo a further digestion, for the purpose of having extracted from them the greatest possible quantity of nutrient particles. Supplied with nerves in a proportion beyond almost any other intestine, and furnished with an appendage, which, although but rudimentary in the human species, is observed in some animals to exhibit a very high degree of organization and mechanical contrivance, we cannot but attribute to it functions of great delicacy, value, and importance in the animal economy. Placed in a

situation where, through the ilio-cæcal valve, or valve of Tulpius, it is hourly, nay momentarily, receiving the residue of the food, as it passes from the small intestines, and yet required for obvious wise purposes, to exercise as it were a species of instinctive discretion, in not transmitting its contents to the colon too immediately ; compelled, when the time to do so does arrive, to overcome the established laws of gravity, in propelling the feculent matter in the proper direction ; it cannot be matter of surprise, that an intestine so finely organized, so liable to over-distention, having such opposite functions to perform, so subject to every influence which can affect the nervous system, with which it is so largely connected, should frequently become the seat of disease. Like other portions of the intestinal canal, the cæcum may be said to possess three distinct coats ; in, however, most instances in its posterior portion, as it reclines upon the psoas and iliac muscles, the peritoneal coat is frequently wanting, and is then replaced by cellular tissue. This arrangement favours distention of the gut, but certainly must take from its strength. Now we have seen that this intestine, like the perpendicular and inferior



transverse portions of the duodenum, is obviously intended to serve rather as a place of residence for portions of the contents of the alimentary tube, than as affording a mere passage to them. Now it is a law in the physiology of muscular fibre, that a force long continued will at length wear out its tonicity, as is exemplified in the over-distended muscular fibres in surcharged bladders of drunkards or paralytics, when the individual loses all power to discharge the contents till the bladder has been allowed to reacquire its tone, by having its contents artificially diminished. We can therefore understand how either a diminution in the irritating quality of the contents, or a decrease in the nervous energy supplied to the muscular fibres of the caput coli, might either of them become a temporary cause of its ceasing to empty itself in its ordinary manner; and how, after it shall once have become over-distended with feculent matter, it may altogether lose the use of its muscular fibres, unless artificially assisted.

Now this is precisely what actually occurs, the cæcum, from some cause, which, in our state of knowledge, it would be difficult to explain, (perhaps from some injury of inner-

vation, but whether arising from terrestrial, from atmospheric, or from constitutional causes, it is impossible to predicate,) becomes over-distended, and, the distention increasing, from the necessary afflux of new particles, becomes inflamed in a low degree; and inflammation unrelieved is soon followed by its numerous consequences, viz. thickening, attachments to surrounding parts, depositions of matter, which, in scrofulous subjects, assume the characters of the tubercular. Hence come derangements of the adjoining portions of intestine, in particular of the colon and ilium; flatulency; a gradually increased difficulty in the gut to transmit its contents; the health becomes broken; hectic fever sets in; the nutrition of the body is deranged to a dangerous degree; and marasmus becomes established. Now, in all which has been adduced, there is nothing which could make us for a moment mistake the assemblage of symptoms detailed for those of *obstipatio*; at no time are stools wholly wanting, they may be fewer and more scanty than natural, but they are at all times present, or easily to be procured by medicine.

## CHAP. IV.

To the disease, as I have described it, I should be disposed to assign the name of *cæconitis*; and as such a term would be in strict accordance with the rules which guided those who have bestowed names on the morbid affections of the other portions of the intestinal canal, I do not foresee any objection to its being adopted.

---

## CHAP. V.

WITH respect to the treatment, although it is based upon simple principles, yet, as the disease differs both in intensity and duration in different individuals, and as the greater number of cases occur in persons of the scrofulous diathesis, who, under all circumstances, require a peculiarly cautious treatment, much must of course be necessarily left to the discretion of the attending physician; the first and grand object must at all times be to alleviate, as far as possible, any

existing symptoms of inflammation. If the individual complain of any unusual degree of pain, leeches must be applied on the abdomen, just over the seat of disease, followed by fomentations, long and carefully, but at the same time, gently and dexterously administered ; at the same time, a moderate dose of castor oil may be exhibited. Subsequently, when pain has been subdued, it is my practice to administer a pill, as follows, at bed time, and another in the morning, and so on till the volume of the stools has been greatly increased, till the consistency has become more soft and homogeneous, and till the evacuations occur twice in the twenty-four hours ; at which period I discontinue the medicine for two or three days, to recommence again as before.

*The Pill* :—Take of watery Extract of Aloës, one grain, and the sixth of a grain ; Gum Mastick, a grain ; rub them well together ; Powder of Ipecacuanha, and dried Soda, each half a grain. Make into a pill.

And I recommend to be taken in the morning, at least half an hour before breakfast, a wine glass of the following mixture :—

Take of Infus. of Quassia and of Gentian equal parts, say three ounces ; of Carbonate of Soda, half a drachm ; of Rectified Spirit, a drachm. Make a mixture.

The pills I occasionally vary with others, containing, in addition to the aperient matter, some steel or iron ; and I prescribe the frequent use of the warm bath. Under the use of those means, the mucous surface of the intestines is encouraged to a regular action, and the mucus, which before either abounded in an unhealthy, inspissated condition, or was not secreted in sufficient abundance, is soon produced in a regular moderate degree, and of an improved quality ; besides this, the reservoir of the cæcum is emptied in a regular, gradual manner, and to the muscular fibres a degree of stimulus is communicated by the aloës, which, in a finely divided form, is brought to act upon them ; the secretions from the liver and pancreas are encouraged, and in most cases, we are rewarded for our trouble, by observing a notable change for the better in the appearance of our patient.

---

## CHAP. VI.

THERE are other circumstances of collateral importance, which tend to confirm the ad-



vantages to be obtained from medicine : such as procuring for the abdomen a degree of well regulated support, which will modify the irregular action of the abdominal muscles lying immediately over the relaxed and irritated gut. I, in general, when no particular objection to its use (such as hæmorrhoids or hernia) exists, order the wearing of a well-made elastic belt, formed so as to give support to the whole of the ventral portion of the abdomen, commencing from the pubis and ending on a line about the umbilicus. The nature and degree of the patient's exercise are matters of infinite importance. In general, walking will be found both useful and agreeable, and ought to constitute a large share of the exercise made use of; next in value is riding in a gig or open carriage, thus taking what may be termed passive exercise, whilst the individual is subjected to the healthy influences of the external atmosphere; next in value I should be disposed to place boating, not of course under circumstances where the person would be called upon for violent exertions; and I find that horse exercise, so far from proving serviceable, as in cases of chronic disease of the liver, always exerts an injurious influ-

ence : to this observation I have been led by noting the ill effects of horse exercise in several instances, the pain and uneasiness of the side having in every case been increased, and what practice and observation have proved to be true, theory can easily explain. It is very evident from nature placing the cæcum in so firm and secure a situation, she anticipated the need for support which a large hollow intestine, constantly filled with solid matter, must require ; and accordingly we see that the cæcum, from its position, is able to sustain the most violent shocks the frame meets with, without disturbance or injury, so long as it preserves its usual healthy condition ; but the case is widely different when we have the same intestine in a state of inflammation, however chronic ; the smallest jolt or succussion will then be dangerous, as it may prove a cause of fresh and further inflammation, which will both temporarily retard our efforts to effect a cure, and render them ultimately more difficult.

In general, a few weeks of well directed care will free the individual from the disease ; and it will then be only requisite, that by an occasional dose of the pills, which, for that purpose, may be varied at the discretion

of the practitioner, he should guard against allowing the cæcum to again become over-distended.

---

## CHAP. VII.

OCCASIONALLY, however, we meet with cases which do not so easily yield even to the most admirably directed treatment ; and in those instances, it would not be proper to rely upon internal medicines alone, as means of bringing into a proper condition the diseased cæcum ; internal purgative medicines cannot ever be continued for a long time with impunity ; and still less are they admissible for more than a very moderate period, where we have an inflamed or irritated intestine, with which they must come in contact for the purpose of producing their proper effects.

In those cases I am in the habit of making use of an invention of my own, which has the effect of keeping up the evacuations from the bowels, and stimulating powerfully, and in a healthy, tonic manner, all the abdominal

viscera, including, of course, the cæcum and colon.

When I meet with one of those intractable cases, in which medicines have been continued as long as I consider prudent, where inflammation has been subdued by leeches, but where, from some thickenings, adhesions, or scrofulous deposits around the cæcum, I perceive that time will be requisite, to afford the constitution the means of overcoming those difficulties, and, if possible, operating the absorption of any matter which may have been deposited; I am in the habit of ordering the patient, on rising in the morning from bed, to have a *douche of cold water*, of about half an inch in diameter, and of a very moderate force, (never exceeding a pound, or a pound and a half at the commencement,) to be made to play for a period, varying from a few seconds to a couple of minutes, upon the abdomen, and to let the stream be principally directed towards the seat of the disease. Even common dashing of the abdomen from a large sponge, or a stream directed from a moderate height, by means of a watering pot, divested of its rose, may be made to answer; but a *douche* from a leather hydraulic tube, having a height of

water of three or four feet to supply the force, and a diameter of half an inch, is the most certain and complete manner in which it can be applied; and any plumber is competent to construct the mechanical part, which may be attached to the reservoir of a common water closet. Mr. Mallet, of this city, has already done so for a patient of mine. Now the effects of this affusion are very remarkable; the bowels are stimulated to action in a very decided and very satisfactory manner; the more so as the action upon the contained matters is in this case peripheral, whilst in the case of the generality of medicines, it commences from the centre. If made use of as a patient rises from bed, by the time the toilet and breakfast have been gone through, the bowels will be ready to act with certainty and with success, and the stools will be both copious and of a satisfactory consistency. With its use I always associate the soothing influences of the warm bath, which I direct to be used twice or thrice in the week; and where I wish to produce the greatest possible effect from the cold affusion, I order its use immediately as the patient leaves the warm bath; but I seldom find it necessary to make use of it in this way, the cold affusion by it-



self generally proving quite sufficient. Now it is quite apparent how the cold affusion produces its effects ; in the first place, by the stimulating effect which it produces upon the muscular fibres : it is well known how much the contents of cavities are disposed to sympathise with their investing parietes ; now, when the cold water reaches the parietes of the abdomen all the muscular fibres are thrown into action ; and by the consent of parts, the muscular fibres of the cæcum, colon, and rectum, are all stimulated to vigorous action ; the result of which must be the urging forward of their contents ; and in the second place, if spasm of any portion of intestine exists, the cold affusion will remove it.

After some time, however, it will in most cases be found requisite to return to the use of the aloetic medicines ; and they will, after the previous intermission, be resorted to with double advantage and effect. They may again be discontinued in favour of the douche, and thus by this alternate system the most formidable cases have been successfully treated, without our being ever forced to continue our purgative medicines to an injurious degree ; the constitution of the patient

being, as we have already said, in all cases supported by a generous and anti-strumous regimen.

---

## CHAP. VIII.

THE lavement machine I have had extensively tried, and I must say with but little success ; unless the quantity of fluid introduced amount to at least a quart or three pints, it cannot reach the seat of disease, except, indeed, a long elastic tube be introduced high up into the colon ; this is, however, a difficult, and unless in skilful hands, a dangerous proceeding.

Electricity I have derived some advantage from ; but the difficulty of obtaining it as often as it might be desirable, and the danger of applying it in the event of any inflammation being present, have both operated in disinclining me to recommend its general adoption.

The tobacco injection would be a valuable if it were not so unmanageable a remedy.

## CHAP. IX.

CASES now and then appear in which the disease is complicated with some taint in the constitution, either of an hereditary or of an acquired nature ; amongst the former I may instance gout and scrofula ; amongst the latter, the poison of lues. In such cases it is impossible to lay down general rules, which would be applicable in all cases, and much must, therefore, be left to the skill and sagacity of the medical attendant ; but I may just remark, that the infusion of sarsaparilla in lime water, made according to the formula given by Dr. O'Beirne of this city, will often prove of service in raising and supporting the constitution. I prefer Doctor O'Beirne's formula to that given in the Pharmacopœia, as the latter does not appear to be as strong in medicinal virtue as the former, and also because it is less agreeable to the palate : no mean consideration in a medicine, which, to be of use, must be drunk to the amount of a pint in the day. The ioduret of iron too, has proved of great service in some scrofulous cases in which it has been given : the best form for its administration is to dissolve the ioduret in a little water, and add

some agreeable syrup, as of orange peel, to cover the flavour. A grain and a half in the day is the proportion with which it is best to commence, and the quantity may be gradually increased. Blisters I have known proposed in consultation, but I have always resisted, where I was able, their application, as the painful irritation of the skin, consequent upon their use, would deprive us of the opportunity of repeating our leechings, and would also, for the time, deprive us of the power of ascertaining the condition of the subjacent inflamed intestine.

Cupplings, to the amount of from one to three ounces of blood from the region of the right loin, just above the crest of the ilium, are occasionally useful ; it would, of course, never be proper to apply a cupping glass over the tumour on the anterior or abdominal side, as the pressure of the edges of the glass might be productive of great injury.

---

## CHAP. X.

I WILL now, from a great number, select a few cases, which will, I trust, illustrate in

a satisfactory manner, the chronic form of disease under consideration ; in the Reports\* of Dr. Ferrall, of this city, will be found some admirably described cases of the disease in a more aggravated and lethal form ; and to his Reports I refer those who are desirous of following out the disease where it occurs in violent and incurable forms ; there is not, I believe, in our language, any other printed account of the disease.

Mrs. Mary Harper, a tradesman's wife, aged 30, applied to me for advice at the St. Anne's Dispensary,† twelve months ago, stating that she was labouring under liver disease. Her countenance was of a yellowish hue, the conjunctiva partaking of the same colour ; she stated that she suffered from almost constant dull pain in the right side, which prevented her from lying upon the opposite side whilst in bed ; she had cough, a dry skin, loaded urine, and flatulent and constipated bowels ; the tongue was foul in the mornings, with a bad bitter taste

---

\* Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal.

† This case was recorded at the Association of Physicians two years ago, and the period referred to was twelve months antecedent to that.



in the mouth ; the pulse 68, languid and soft ; under the circumstances I might, perhaps, have been inclined to coincide in the opinion of her labouring under some affection of the liver of a chronic nature ; but having requested to be allowed to make an examination of the abdomen, and having visited her at her home for that purpose, I discovered that pressure upwards, in the direction of the liver, did not produce any distress, or at all increase the pain complained of ; but that when I pressed in a direction downwards and towards the right side, I caused considerable increase of pain ; in addition, I discovered in that portion of the abdomen, corresponding to the upper part of the right iliac fossa, and on a line with the superior anterior spinous process of the ilium, a tumour of an irregular figure, and whose limits I found it difficult to exactly define ; the parietes of the abdomen moved freely over the tumour, in which there did not appear any thing like fluctuation, but on the contrary, the sensation communicated to the fingers was as from a body rough in surface and solid in texture ; and on pressing exactly over this tumour, a still greater degree of pain was produced, the pain shooting, or rather radi-

ating in every direction, into the small of the back and upwards toward the shoulder ; and in this particular case, percussion shewed that the liver did not reach the limits of the tumour, and such is very frequently the case.

Having seen many similar cases, I was at no loss in forming a diagnosis, and the result of the treatment proved, I think, the correctness of my opinion.

I immediately ordered twelve leeches to the abdominal tumour, to be followed by fomentations ; this was repeated two days, with marked effect in diminishing the pain ; in the mean time a dose of castor oil had been administered, which had the effect of passing through, and carrying with it some fluid fæcal matter. She was now ordered extract of aloës in combination with gum mastick, and a very small proportion of ipecacuanha, and the pills were continued during three weeks ; at the end of which time she left town, as she, herself, said, quite relieved, and in better health than she had been in for years before. I did not again hear from her for nearly twelve months, when she presented herself with all the same symptoms identically as they had appeared a year before. The same treatment had

again the same effect as in the first instance, but the time occupied in effecting the removal of the symptoms of disease was rather longer, she being under treatment in the second instance during five weeks, and some pills being ordered afterwards, at stated intervals, for prophylactic uses. She never again made her appearance, and I have every reason to suppose that she has had no further return of disease.

Now had this individual not been subjected to a rigorous examination of the abdomen, the probability is that mercury in some form would have been the plan of treatment laid down, and not only would the disease not have been cured, but the patient might, like other unfortunates who have been subjected to mercurial courses, have lived a monument of misery, and, perhaps, cursed the hour she first employed a medical man.

I will now give some particulars of another case, which I think will illustrate the disease, and I give it with the more readiness, because it was one which, occurring in a wealthy individual, gave me an opportunity of conferring with a medical person of great experience, and also because the individual, although quite cured of the disease,

for which he had been under my care, was subsequently carried off by phthisis, or pulmonary consumption, to all appearance induced by a course of mercury, to which he was, subsequently to my seeing him, subjected, and from the dangers of which I had felt so much pleasure in previously saving him.

Mr. —, a gentleman, thirty-five years of age, colosanguineous temperament, of moderately active habits, applied to me two years and nine months back, stating that he was labouring under liver disease, for which he had been treated with mercury in the country, but that his affairs having brought him to town, he desired to put himself under the care of some one, in order that his cure might not experience any interruption.

His countenance was indicative of exhaustion, pale, with the conjunctiva of a yellow colour; he complained of pain and fulness in the right side; of windy and constipated bowels, attended with occasional slight attacks of diarrhœa; loss of appetite and sleep; headach; loaded urine; and a tongue dry and brown in the centre in the mornings, but looking not very unnatural in the day time; the pulse soft, and rather small,



but not more frequent than natural; no cough.

On laying him upon a couch, and conducting my examination in the usual manner, I was unable to detect any disease in the liver, but was able satisfactorily to ascertain the existence of a large irregular tumour, occupying the upper part of the right iliac fossa, and stretching up to within half an inch of the liver; and again, on making an examination whilst the gentleman was in the warm bath, I was able to clearly ascertain that this tumour, of an irregular knotted form, arose from the iliac fossa, and stretched up in front of the kidney on the right side, but ceased abruptly about half a hand's breadth above, but nearer the mesial line than the anterior superior spinous process of the ilium. In this examination, from the manner in which the diaphragm was raised, owing to the pressure of the water, the liver was more than half a hand removed from the tumour, although, in the dry examination, it had appeared to be within half an inch of it. On meeting in consultation an eminent medical man, he agreed with me as to the nature and seat of the disease, and we subjected the patient to a plan of treatment, differ-



ing in nothing essential from what has been already detailed, except that the lavement machine was put in frequent requisition, and we had him twice electrified by passing shocks through the abdomen, and by draw-sparks from the tumour; this was, however, not persevered in. From the aloes and gum-mastick, administered as before laid down, and from the alternating system of the cold douche made to play upon the abdomen divested of clothes, the greatest good was derived, and I am happy to say, that we were able, after long treatment, and having had to contend with frequent relapses, to entirely relieve him of the disease in question. He went to travel, having recovered his *en bon point* and health in all respects; but, alas, his recovery was followed by the contraction of a malady of a wholly different character, for which an English surgeon of great eminence treated him profusely with mercury; and about a year and a half from the time he had left my hands in a state of completely restored health, he sunk under pulmonary phthisis, induced, as there was every reason to suppose, by the mercurial course to which he had been subjected; and from

which, though under different circumstances, I had saved him eighteen months before.

In the above case the ascending portion of the colon was manifestly engaged as well as the cæcum, and that such is frequently the case is very probable ; but as the treatment need not on that account be in any way altered, it is, I think, a matter of little importance.

I could adduce many other cases, but should in so doing too much lengthen out this letter, which has already surpassed the limits I had first assigned to it.\*

I may, however, say that I have at present under my care a gentleman who has laboured under cæconitis in its chronic form for three years, liable at uncertain intervals of time to attacks, bearing more of the character of the acute stage ; and during the whole of the above period he was not able to dispense

---

\* At the time those observations were going to press, my friend Sir James Murray communicated to me some cases of great interest, which had come under his hands, and which I regret not having been able to notice, as they were highly illustrative of my views ; and as one of them referred to an illustrious individual who had been his patient, they would have added much to the interest and instruction to be found in this letter.—*Author.*

with the use of purgative medicine for three days consecutively. Since he has been under my care he has used the cold douche with so much advantage, that he has not been obliged, with one exception, to resort to opening medicines for the space of an entire month; and yet the stools are large, copious, and of a proper consistency, sometimes amounting to two in the day, and all his symptoms have undergone a marked improvement; his flesh is increasing, his colour is improved, and he has not had a single attack of acute pain, since he has been in my hands; although from the amount of thickening, which already, during so long a period as three years, had time to form, the cure must necessarily require time; yet I am convinced he will be quite restored in the course of the present summer.

---

## CHAP. XII.

SOME general statistical observations have suggested themselves to my mind; but as such observations require time and the united experience of many observers to give them

value, I prefer passing that part of the subject over in silence ; only remarking, that individuals of all ages between twenty and sixty are, I think, alike liable to the disease. I have known but one instance in which cæconitis had made its appearance in an individual under twenty ; and in no case have I observed the disease to affect persons beyond sixty.

You will observe that I have not adverted to the disease in its incurable forms ; that it occasionally proves fatal, is quite certain ; the daughter of an eminent legal character in this city, as also the child of a French nobleman, both to my knowledge succumbed under incurable cæconitis.

Pathological details I have as much as possible avoided, as they would (although interesting to the medical man) be wholly unintelligible to the popular reader ; and I trust that you, and any other medical persons into whose hands this may fall, will, for the same reasons, excuse the plainness of my language, in which I have as much as possible avoided any thing like professional technicalities.

Trusting that some portion of advantage may accrue to the public from my efforts,

however trifling and unimportant they may be,

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your obliged and obedient,

F. W. SMITH.

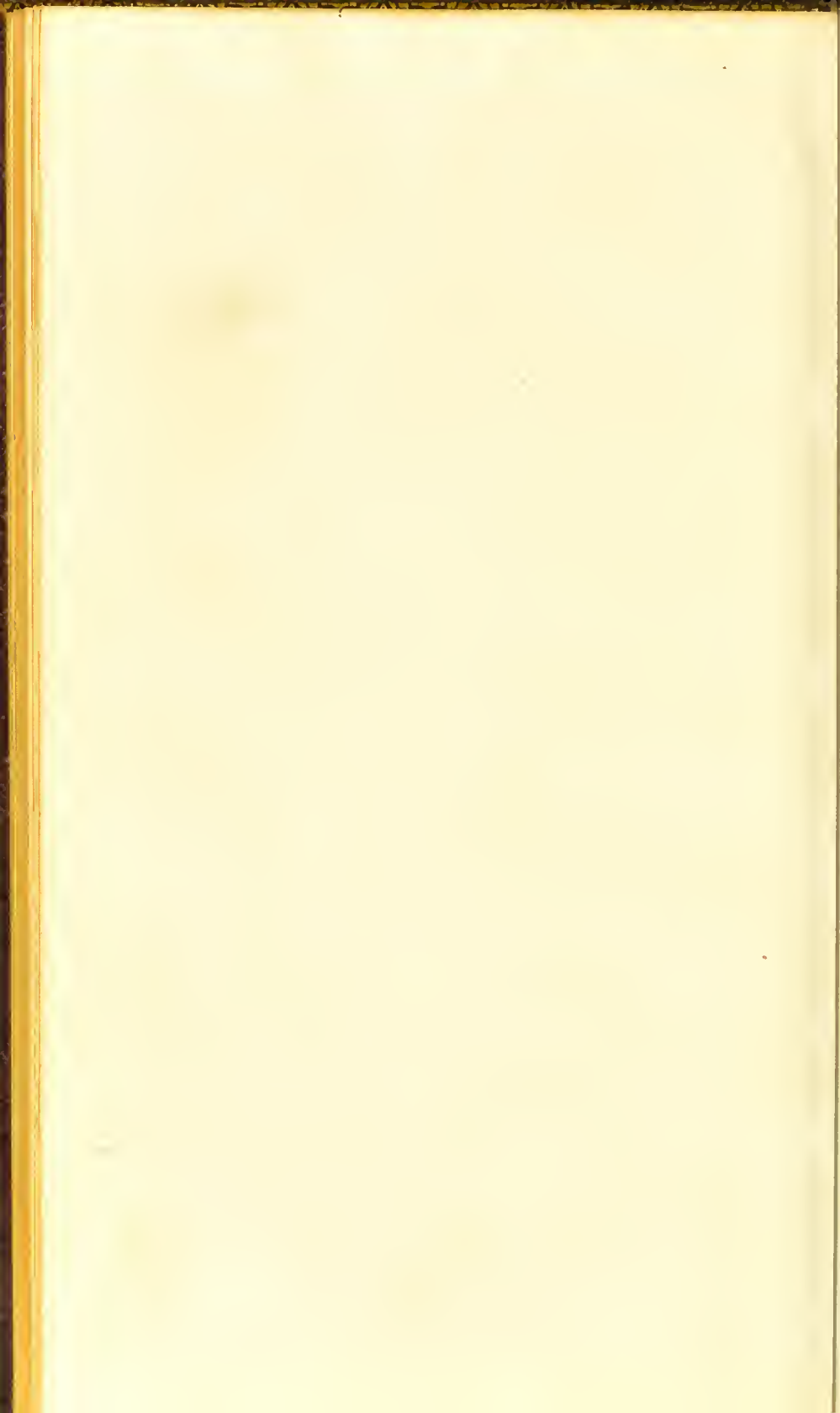




















*The University Library  
Leeds*



*The Library of the  
School of Medicine*



